

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, EDITORS OF 'CHAMBERS'S INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE,' 'CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE,' &c.

No. 177. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MAY 22, 1847.

PRICE 1½d.

FIRESIDE MYTHS.

AMONGST simple popular tales, there are many which are met with in application to more places than one. I shall endeavour to recall the class by a few examples.

Visit almost any first-rate Gothic church of the middle ages, and you are sure to be regaled with a story of an apprentice who built an extraordinary pillar. The master architect wished to make one pillar of surpassing beauty. He travelled to obtain ideas for the purpose. Meanwhile the apprentice, out of his own genius, executed the pillar, which the master no sooner saw on his return, than he fell upon the ambitious youth and killed him. The story must be true, for see, there is in one corner the rueful face of the slain lad with a gash on the brow; and there, in another, is his mother weeping for him! Among many places where this story is localised, is Roslin chapel, a singularly beautiful though small specimen of the florid Gothic, near Edinburgh.

In a lonely vale lies a beautiful lake of almost unknown depth. Such a lake is that of Wensley Dale in Yorkshire, which, however, the country people believe to have once been only a small mountain rill called Summer-water. In those days there stood upon the banks of the rivulet a great city. One day a wayfarer, barely clothed, hungry, and penniless, but yet of noble and engaging aspect, came thither soliciting alms and shelter. He sought in vain, and then turned eastward down the vale. Now, fast without the bounds of the city there lived an aged couple, too poor and mean to be allowed to take up their residence within the precincts of this proud and inhospitable town. Into their dwelling the stranger betook himself, and ere he had told his tale of woe, they placed before him the best their house afforded—namely, a little bowl of milk, some cheese, and an oaten cake. Having satisfied his hunger, he bestowed upon them his blessing both in basket and in store. Beneath their roof was his dormitory for the night. On the morrow he repeated his benison, which was attended with the effect of making his hosts increase from that day in worldly wealth. Being then ready to depart, he turned his face to the west, and uttered this malediction—

'Summer-water rise, Summer-water sink,

And swallow all the town but this little house,

Where they gave me bread and cheese, and summat to drink.'

Immediately the earth made a hissing noise, the stream overflowed its bounds, and the city was buried in a deep flood. If you are incredulous of the tale, take a boat and sail over the lake on a calm day, and you will see (with some little assistance from those having faith) the tops of the houses and spires of the churches, which still stand after a lapse of more than a thousand years. Lough Neagh in Ulster is a similar example of a pool

that has submerged a city; and this a well-known poet alludes to—

'On Lough Neagh's bank, as the fisherman strays,
When the clear cold eve's declining,
He sees the round towers of other days
In the wave beneath him shining.'

The lake of Grand-Lieu, in Brittany, is another of these ravenous waters, and is supposed to disgorge to this day fragments of carved wood, the relics of a city submerged in the first centuries of our era.*

The popular account of the building of Stonehenge is a capital example of these fireside tales. To quote a local reporter:—'The prophet Merlin, desirous of having a parcel of stones which grew in an odd sort of form in a back-yard belonging to an old woman in Ireland, transported thence to Salisbury Plain, employed the devil upon the work, who, the night after, dressing himself like a gentleman, and taking a large bag of money in his hand, presented himself before the good woman as she was sitting at her table, and acquainted her of the purchase he was come to make; the fiend at the same time pouring out his money on the board before her, and offering her as much for the stones as she could reckon while he should be taking them away. The money was all in odd sorts of coins—such as four-penny - halfpenny pieces, ninepenny pieces, thirteenpenny-halfpenny pieces, and the like—but nevertheless

* The Zuyder Zee in Holland, in like manner, stagnates over the city of Stavoren, drowned in consequence of the impiety of a female merchant. This lady, expecting the arrival of precious merchandise, was so much disappointed on receiving instead merely a cargo of corn, that in her rage she commanded it to be thrown overboard into the harbour. In vain the starving poor supplicated a portion—bag after bag, the grain sunk into the bitter waters: and the same night the sea rose over the city, which disappeared for ever. The site of its harbour, however, is still designated by long reedy grass (for corn, it may be supposed, degenerates in salt water) waving above the surface, and the name it retains to this day of *Frauen's Sand*, or the *Lady's Bank*.

The lake of Laach, near the Rhine, occupies a cavity resembling the crater of an extinct volcano. The water is disagreeable to the taste, of a blue colour, and deadly cold, though it never freezes; and in consequence of some ancient malediction—if we are to believe tradition against the testimony of our senses—no bird can fly over its surface and live. The key to the story is a pit on the eastern bank, which exhales carbonic acid gas in considerable quantities.

Sometimes, however, instead of lakes being formed, existing waters disappear. A plain between Heidelberg and Darmstadt, dotted with small hills, which rise up like islands, and surrounded by the steep sides of the mountains, which look as if they were intended to form a breastwork against the waves, was formerly, it seems, the bed of a lake. A necromancer, who had kept the country in terror, was seized by the prince and hung up in the air in an iron cage, so as to render his charms unavailing: in which predicament he proposed, by way of ransom, to dry up the lake, and convert the spot into a fertile plain. The terms were accepted; and hence the sandy flat near Darmstadt, where the waters disappeared, and the celebrated whirlpool at Bingen, called *Bingerloch*, where they rose up again to mingle with the current of the Rhine.

the devil's proposals seemed so very advantageous, that, notwithstanding the difficulty there would be in reckoning the money, the old woman could not avoid complying with it, as she imagined the removal of the stones by a single man would be a work of almost infinite time, and that she should be able to tell as much money while it should be about as would make her as rich as a princess. But the bargain was no sooner made, and she had no sooner laid her fingers on a four-penny-halfpenny coin, than the devil, with an audible voice, cried out, "Hold!" and "The stones are gone!" The old woman, disregarding what he said, however, peeped out into her back-yard, and to her great amazement, it was even so as Satan had spoken; for the common deceiver of mankind in an instant took down the stones, bound them up in a withe, and conveyed them to Salisbury Plain. But just before he got to Mount Ambre the withe slackened, and as he was crossing the river Avon at Bulford, one of the stones dropped down into the water, where it lies to this very hour; the rest were immediately reared up on the spot of ground destined by Merlin for them: and the devil, pleased with the accomplishment of his work, declared, upon fixing the last stone, that nobody should be ever able to tell how the fabric, or any of the parts of which it is composed, came there. A friar, who had lain all night concealed near the building, hearing the devil's declaration, replied to it by saying, "That is more than thee canst tell;" which put Satan into such a passion, that he snatched up a pillar and hurled it at the friar, with an intention to bruise him to dirt; but he running for his life, the stone in its fall only reached his heel, and struck him on it; the mark of which appears in that pillar even unto this day, and is called *The Friar's Heel*.*

There are similar stories to this regarding the building of many other great structures. In Scotland, Dumbarton Castle was reared by a witch, who compelled the devil to bring the stones to her from Ireland: he dropped one by the way, and behold it in the Firth of Clyde to this day, in the goodly form of Ailsa Craig! Most old buildings of magnitude in our northern land are ascribed to a people called the Pechts, 'of stature short, but genius bright,' as Burns says of Captain Grose, and who handed forward the stones from one to another between the quarry and the masonry. In Ireland, such structures are believed to have been the work of certain wandering masons of gigantic stature, called the Gobbans. Perhaps the Cyclops of the Greeks were to them what the Pechts are to the Scotch and the Gobbans to the Irish. There is also in Scotland a very peculiar class of stories about old buildings. When the situation of the edifice is at all peculiar, as in a bog, we are sure to hear that it was first designed to be somewhere else; but, as the walls rose, everything that was done during the day was by supernatural agency undone at night, till at length a voice gave directions for the structure being commenced in another place—which order being obeyed, there was no longer any difficulty. I have had occasion to trace this story in Lanarkshire, Fifeshire, Forfarshire, and even in places still more remote from one another.

Till very lately, these fireside prattlings were disregarded; but now it is seen that there are principles in them reflecting some light upon great investigations. They take their place among those myths to which learned writers have latterly directed no small degree of attention.† A myth may be described as a history of a person or thing which has not originated in facts, but in suggestions which the person or thing was calculated to awaken in unenlightened minds. Thus, such a mind contemplating a lake which fills a valley, and seeing other valleys occupied by hamlets and towns, imagines

that this vale may have been once occupied by towns also. From dreaming this to setting it forth as a fact, is but a step. A natural tendency to exaggeration makes the town a large one—a city, with towers and spires. A reason for its submergence is easily imagined: persons in humble life having a tendency to believe themselves exclusive possessors of the virtues, nothing is more natural than to suppose the event to have been owing to the selfish wickedness of these proud citizens. Behold furnished forth a myth! So also as to the Prentice's Pillar. It had been a whimsical practice of the mediæval architects to have one column excessively decorated. In after-times, the same disposition to attribute great qualities where they are least to be expected, suggested that this was the work of an apprentice. The killing of the youth is but a naturally supposable result of such an insult to the master. Against this reading of the tale, it is no obstruction that perhaps, in such late instances as Roslin, where the prentice and his mother are sculptured, the pillar was owing to the already existing legend. Stonehenge, in like manner, suggests the fictitious account of its structure. A stray boulder in the bed of the Avon lends corroboration, if it did not help to the making of the story. As to old buildings in general, their origin is beyond the ken of the common people; seeing how much they exceed the powers of the thin population now living at the spot, the idea of a different aboriginal people as their constructors unavoidably arises. And so a tale of Pechts, Gobbans, or Cyclops takes its ground. Even an unexpected situation for a building is obviously qualified to start some similar supposition as to its cause, and thus to raise a legend on the subject.

All natural objects of a singular nature have their explanations from the popular imagination before they fall under the regard of science. The scattered Celts of the northern glens, seeing one or two of those recesses marked with broad flat terraces, which stretch for miles along the hill-sides—a grand and mysterious-looking object—speedily have it settled amongst themselves that those terraces were roads made for hunting by their early hero Fingal, himself a mythic personage. It required a careful examination from minds instructed in such knowledge, to ascertain that they were the margins of a lake which had sunk through a succession of levels, according as its boundaries were reduced.† Even to the present day, the Celt is by no means over-pleased to abandon his own dream for this conclusion. The channel of Sapey brook in Herefordshire consists of a long stripe of old red sandstone, enclosed between high banks, and along the surface of the stone are a series of marks, resembling the footsteps of a horse and colt, and those of a person walking on pattens. There can be no doubt with geologists that these are the traces of fossils or concretions which formerly existed in the surface of the rock; but very different from this is the account given of them by the common people thereabouts. By a process the most intelligible imaginable, they have got up a story of a St Catherine, who lived at Burton, having had a horse and foal stolen from her by a girl wearing a pair of pattens, by whom the two animals were conducted along the channel of the brook for concealment. Discovering the loss of her property, the saint prayed that the feet of the thief, the horse, and colt, might leave indelible marks wherever they went. Accordingly, the rock in the channel of the brook became impressed with the three sets of footsteps.

* This was the conclusion at which Sir Thomas Dick Lauder arrived in an excellent paper on the Parallel Roads of Glenroy, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. The ingenious Mr Darwin, so distinguished by his South American Travels, has since obtained a temporary predominance for a theory which represents the terraces as produced by the sea, in the course of an uprise of the land from that element. The present writer is now satisfied, from personal examination of the country, that the latter idea is untenable, and that incontrovertible evidence exists for establishing the explanation of Sir Thomas Dick Lauder. Of the evidence an able view has lately been brought before the Royal Society of Edinburgh by Mr David Milne, advocate.

* A Description of Stonehenge on Salisbury Plain. Pp. 3-5. Salisbury, 1829.

† See Müller's Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology. Translated from the German by John Leitch. London: 1844. Also Grote's History of Greece, vol. 1.

Here the process of the fabrication of the story is palpable, and the girl and her act, as well as the two animals concerned, are merely ideas excited by the appearances, since transformed, in perfect good faith, into a history.

The truth is, that *might* be unavoidably leads to *is* or *was*. Let any appearance be presented to us in a striking manner, and it speedily becomes alive with the vagrant notions of our brains, first set forth perhaps as fancies, but soon petrified into realities. Cumberland tells us in his 'Lives of the Spanish Painters,' of a beautiful Virgin Mary painted by a distinguished artist upon the ceiling of a church. The Catholic believes that the Virgin performs miracles to this hour. He also knows that a painting on a ceiling has to be done by the artist lying on his back, in somewhat dangerous circumstances, upon a scaffold. Accordingly, it is not wonderful that visitors to the church are told of a wonderful deliverance for which the painter was indebted to the creature of his pencil. He had nearly completed his work; he was surveying it in mute and pious rapture; totally forgetting himself, he slipped from his proper place, and was about to be dashed on the floor below, when the Virgin put out her arm and upheld him! It is a simple result of a law of the mind with regard to the circumstances, that this story should have been conceived, and told, and believed.

Most superstitions and mythologies have probably had no other source than in the suggestions of actual circumstances and events. It has been remarked that the Greeks of Asia Minor, seeing the sun set in glory upon the mountains beyond the sea to the west, might very naturally conceive the idea of an Olympus which was the residence of the gods. *Ætina* and its subterranean noises were equally calculated to engender the idea of Vulcan and his occupations. Müller has pointed out how, among those divine-minded Greeks, abstractions were continually being crystallised into persons. Not long since, an author endeavoured, in a very plausible manner, to show how, among heathen nations, the sea-stratified sand, found at great elevations in so many places, was quite sufficient to suggest the notion of a universal flood, which is found almost everywhere prevalent amongst them. The fairies are a wide-spread superstition; but can anything be more natural than to suppose a kind of ideal forms, more beautiful than those of common mortals, pursuing an obscure nocturnal existence, and occasionally traversing the course of human destiny? We only do not know the real history of these things, because the transition from the possible to the actual is performed so quickly in the popular mind, and at so early a period in its growth, as to escape enlightened observation. Even the gross superstition of witchcraft is only an idea of the malignity which occasionally besets the human heart, made tangible, and carried out into its contemplated effects. Simple man loves the kind greetings and the parting good wishes of his friends: he attaches consequence to these things, as if they could have an influence over his fortunes. It is equally natural for him to dread evil wishes and denunciations. Hence his horror of misanthropic old women—hence witchcraft. Some superstitious stories, which are told in many places with little variation besides that of persons, may be traced to the same metaphysical origin. There is one which presents a young man as selling his soul to Satan, for the sake of some too-much desired object—as learning, a mistress, or gold—and being afterwards with difficulty saved by means of a pious clergyman, who tricks the enemy out of his pledge. Who can fail to see the mere *supposable* creating the actual? Another presents a hare wounded by a shot in passing across a field. The animal mysteriously disappears; but that moonoon, a noted Sycofax of the neighbourhood is obliged to send for a surgeon to heal a broken limb. The story is told everywhere in our country, with slightly varying circumstances. It is of course only a supposition converted into reality.

In the records of heraldry might be found many examples of such reflective creations. From the Scottish genealogist, we have the family of Lealy originating in a person who,

'Between the *less* Lee and the *mair*,
Slew the knight, and left him there;'

and that of Douglas, from a dark-gray man [*du glas* being Gaelic for dark-gray]; the simple fact being, that both names arose in the usual manner from the places where the first man of the family lived. 'A singular mistake,' says Mr Lower, in his *Curiosities of Heraldry*, 'prevails among the vulgar respecting the bloody hand borne in the arms of baronets. I have been very seriously and confidentially told that murders had been committed by the ancestors of such and such families, and that the descendants were compelled to bear this dreadful emblem in consequence. According to the same sapient authorities, it can only be got rid of by the bearer's submitting, either in his own person, or by proxy, to *pass seven years in a cave, without either speaking or cutting his nails and beard for that length of time!* The intelligent reader need not be informed that this supposed badge of infamy is really a mark of honour, derived from the province of Ulster in Ireland, the defence and colonisation of which was the specious plea upon which the order of baronets was created by James I.' This is a particularly valuable example, as it shows us the popular fancy working out its tale in a definite time, and that by no means of great extent.

It is humbly conceived that there may be some profit from such an examination of the mental processes by which fireside myths are produced. It may be to many a first lesson in the important business of truth-seeking. The world is yet full of actualised abstractions handed down from infant mankind. They form a portion of every history, and of almost every philosophical system. Nor does there pass a day even now, which does not witness the process of fabricating history, biography, and common anecdote, out of the suggestions connected with the respective subjects. It is well to be put on our guard against such things, for they are the very thorns and brambles which beset the path of truth. I contemplate, however, a superior advantage in merely leading the minds of my readers to follow a line of inquiry by which error may be detected. Every thought we give to an earnest effort for the discrimination of truth and delusion, must carry with it an increase to the power of the mind, as well as some improvement to its conscientiousness. I therefore hope that, even in this slight paper, there may be the elements of a mental discipline which will advance not a few in the scale of thinking beings.

CONSTANCY.

'THERE is a tale of old St Monan's harp, that when the pilgrim minstrel was no more, it uttered but one sound whoever touched it; however gay, however glad or lightsome, was the tune that any other finger tried to play, a long, long sigh was all the sound that came.'

'What an exquisite idea! How beautiful—how full of poetical feeling!' exclaimed Elizabeth Monro, as, closing her book with a responsive sigh, she leant back in her easy-chair, and surrendered herself to the fancies awakened by these words. Her mother, who had been silently working at the other side of the fireplace while Elizabeth read, now looked up, smiling at the mournful cadence with which the little sentence had been uttered; but her smile faded into seriousness as she met the abstracted look of her young daughter, and recognised the workings of a too vivid and romantic imagination in her varying cheek and dreamy eyes. Happily she was aware those symptoms resulted from imagination alone; and though the anxious expression lingered on her countenance, it lent no gravity to her tone as she answered, 'I should say, most fanciful, most poetical, or even beautiful, if you will; but, dearest Elizabeth,

in what consists its mournful truth, or where are we to find its parallel?

With half indignant eagerness Elizabeth raised herself from her indolent position, and impetuously exclaimed, 'Oh, mamma! how can you ask? Surely its echo is found in every loving, constant heart?'

Mrs Monro's smile returned as she asked, 'The echo of what, Elizabeth?—of the long, long sigh? Alas for the loving, constant heart, were that to be its only occupation and reward!'

But it was with a still more earnest look Elizabeth replied to her mother's half-bantering tone and words. 'Mamma, I do think there is something mournful in the idea of constancy: does not its very existence imply somewhat of delay and disappointment, and hope deferred—a strain upon the heart till hope is over, and then a grief incurable, irremediable, till life itself is past?'

The tears that shaded Elizabeth's soft eyes bespoke her full conviction of the truth of this description, and checked the smile that still was lingering on her mother's lip. For a moment Mrs Monro paused, and then with gentle seriousness she answered—'Not so, my child; not such is the meaning that I would attach to constancy. Oh how differently the word strikes upon my ear, upon my heart! You look upon it as a sentiment; you confine it to one passion; you make it the handmaid of weak hearts, paralysing even their puny strength; while I regard it as a principle existing in noble minds; prompting to noble deeds; imparting fortitude, endurance, perseverance, instead of passively supporting a morbid state of feeling, or encouraging an obstinate resistance to circumstances—an opposition to the judgment of wiser and more experienced heads.'

As Mrs Monro spoke, her eyes involuntarily rested on an old portrait which hung upon the opposite wall, and following the look, with an arch smile Elizabeth exclaimed, 'If there be truth in tradition, we have at least no example of constancy there!'

Her mother turned on her a look of pained inquiry as she asked, 'Elizabeth, where did you learn that? I was just going to select the original of that portrait as affording beyond all, or any I had ever known, the best exemplification of my opinion; the best proof that even in the quiet circle of domestic life, the constant heart may become a refuge of strength, not only for its own support, but for the happiness of all within its sphere. Look attentively for a moment at that countenance, and tell me—even had you never been acquainted with her it represents, never heard or known aught of her life or character—what would be the impression those features would convey?'

With a deprecating gesture, as if the study were indeed superfluous, Elizabeth rose in obedience to her mother's wish, and perused more closely those lineaments, so well known and well beloved. It was the portrait of a lady, matronly, but not advanced in life; an air of serene thoughtfulness seemed to add more years than time had reckoned, and gave intelligence and decision to features cast in nature's gentlest and most feminine mould. Elizabeth looked long and thoughtfully at that sweet face; and even after she had returned to her seat, still fascinated, bent her gaze upon it, until a question from her mother reminded her that she had not given the desired opinion yet. Starting, she hurriedly exclaimed, 'Oh, mamma! who could read aught but truth and honour on that clear, expressive brow; or detect one fickle wavering line in the whole of that earnest face? And yet—' She paused, apparently unwilling to qualify her testimony, but gave her mother an appealing look, as if she too must be aware that something in the experience or history of that individual contradicted the fair promise pictured there.

Mrs Monro took up the unfinished sentence. 'And yet—you have possibly heard, that, fickle and untrue to her earliest attachment, she wedded another for the sake of house and lands, while he that loved her first was far away, winning in other lands the gold which

was to have made her his. I knew that, long ago, some such story had been spoken, but hardly thought it could have survived its little day, outlived her blameless, admirable life, to find at last a resting-place in the bosom of one of her descendants.' She paused abruptly, while Elizabeth, surprised and grieved at this unusual reproof, hastened, with words full of gentleness and affection, to apologise for her involuntary fault.

Conquering her momentary emotion, Mrs Monro more calmly continued—'You remember that dear parent, Elizabeth, and with a memory full of reverence and love; of that I am convinced, even though you thus lightly spoke. But had you known her as I did—had you been honoured with her confidence—had you been of an age to appreciate her rare and noble heart before that heart was stilled—you would not wonder that it was with a feeling akin to some sudden bodily pain I saw her memory wronged by a child of mine—of hers. And now, to remove that impression for ever, listen to me. I need not, perhaps, tell you of her earliest years, how she lost her mother before she knew her, and was brought up entirely beneath a father's eye. I do believe he must have been such a father as those harsher times rarely exhibited, for he sacrificed ambition, and every former predilection, to devote himself to his little helpless child. Descended from an ancient family, and the last of his line, and hitherto most desirous of an heir, he resisted every temptation to a second marriage, fearing to place a stepmother over his darling, and reconciled himself to the disappointment of not having a son, by feeling that there was no child in Christendom for whom he would exchange his daughter. Thus he loved her, while she, unacquainted with any other experience, accepted his deep affection as the usual expression of parental love, and imagined that every child in the world was as fortunate as herself. Thus in happy ignorance she passed through her nursery, her school-room days; their period abridged by her lonely father's anxiety to have her seated beside him in his library, while he directed even her childish studies himself.

'One day he was unusually grave, and answered her remarks and questions absently, while now and then he would lay down his book, and re-peruse a letter which lay beside him on the table, each time apparently less satisfied with the contents. At last he said abruptly, "Cicely, I expect a visitor to-day. Your cousin, Georgy Hume, is very ill, and is coming here for change of air."

'Cicely's heart bounded with joy at the thought of that unknown luxury—a young companion; but the next moment checked its gladness with the recollection of his being ill; and, full of sympathy, she inquired the circumstances from her father. Drawing her towards him, in grave and half-reluctant tones he proceeded to inform her that Georgy was not only ill, but very unhappy too, and that it was as much for his mind's health as for that of his body that he was sent to those who would take care of him and love him well.

'Cicely's glistening eyes had promised for her; but she quickly inquired, "What makes Georgy unhappy?" And looking up in her father's face, she added very softly, "Has he lost his own papa?"

'The eyes she was gazing at became clouded with emotion, and even a tear fell upon her cheek with the kiss that was imprinted there at once; but the answer was very different from the one she apprehended, "Oh no, my child; but he has got a new mamma!"

"A new mamma!" interrupted the little girl. "Oh, papa, is not that a happy thing? Why did you never get me a new mamma?"

'It was now the father's turn to speak impetuously; and, surprised out of his self-possession, he replied, 'Because I loved you too dearly, my own heart's treasure. Nothing was ever to supply your place to me, or mine to you. Georgy's new mamma has been unkind, and his heart, they say, is breaking; and if he was not sent away, he would soon be in his grave.'

'This little scene has been described to me by her

who never afterwards forgot it. It was her first introduction to the evils and sorrows of actual life; but if it opened a view down that gloomy vista, it also lighted up the past with a glow such as she had never felt before. With somewhat of awe, and a mysterious chill, she awaited the arrival of this young stranger, so early initiated into grief; and as she soothed, and comforted, and wound herself into the recesses of his heart, she learned from the artless detail of all he had suffered, to appreciate her own more favoured lot, and all the self-denying affection her own dear parent had shown. With years and acquaintance with the world, this knowledge deepened, while closer and closer she was drawn to that earliest love that had smoothed her life-long path; and it became the constant purpose of her heart to return it devotedly, and to consider no sacrifice too great, could it insure the happiness of him who had only thought of hers.

'The trial came, deeper and sooner than perhaps she had expected; but, true to her resolve, she endured it with steadfast heart. Georgy had outlived his childish griefs, or found, whenever they returned, that loving friends and a happy home still remained in the haven that had sheltered him at first. No wonder that each succeeding year increased the attraction of these friends, and that at last he became conscious there was no happiness where they were not. Alas for poor Georgy! his lot was differently cast. A relative in India had written to his father offering honourable occupation and emolument to his son if he came out; and, engrossed by the interests and advancement of his second family—influenced perhaps also by his wife, who retained all her early unkindness—Georgy's father insisted that the offer should be accepted. Family ties were easily broken; but there was one sad, sad parting, though for a time young sanguine hearts had hope that there need have been no parting at all; but when older ones were consulted, arrangements were found incompatible; and sorrowfully but determinedly Cicely relinquished a desire that for the first time brought a furrow on her father's loving brow.

'I hasten over all those scenes—indeed to me they never were enlarged on; but looking at that countenance, so gentle, yet so steadfast, we well may imagine how her constancy was tried when she thus un murmuringly sacrificed an attachment that had grown with her growth, and had woven itself from childhood into a heart such as hers. But more was yet to come. Years passed away—long, sweet, tranquil years, cheered by filial love, and perhaps by some lingering distant hope—when, in one of those commercial revolutions which from time to time have occurred in this country, involving many who seemed to have no direct connection with such events, it was discovered that Cicely's father had long before become security for a mercantile friend, a circumstance almost forgotten until his ruin brought each past transaction to light.

'Slowly it dawned upon him and on her. In fortune and prospects both were irretrievably ruined. The memories, the hopes of years, in one hour were obliterated as things that had never been: that old demesne, those trees, those walls; each revered, each familiar object all to pass away, to become the property of a stranger, and the place that had borne their name to know them no more. So much for the past; but the future—oh, how to meet that, how even contemplate the obscurity that had suddenly settled on their lives! Their sun had gone down at noon, and in the midst of life's enjoyments they were surrounded by a darkness that could be felt.

'And now shone out the constant heart. At a meeting of pitying friends, who thought at first that something might be saved, one inconsiderately remarked, "Ah, if this girl had been a son, they couldn't touch a foot of your property! What a pity you never thought of marrying again!" He to whom the speech was addressed had not time to check its thoughtless utterance, but he opened his arms to the drooping flower that

sought shelter in his bosom, as again he reiterated the declaration of his earlier life—"No son could be so precious as this daughter is to me—dearer than houses or lands, or even a time-honoured name: while she is spared, I heed them not, nor feel the blow but for her sake."

'The drooping head was raised, the bright eyes glistened, no longer tearful and sorrowing, but full of holy confidence and joy. She was all in all to her father; she filled the place of every hope, every regret; she sufficed his entire heart, and life could have no dearer reward. Then with cheerful spirit she turned again to the future, and examined her own powers, to discover in what manner she best could alleviate the privations which must be expected, without forfeiting the independence of character so precious to them both.

'They left their beloved home, and took possession of a humble dwelling. We may well believe that wounded pride found no place or entrance there; and if Cicely was sometimes pained when, with the forgetfulness of advancing years, her father would ask for some once essential comfort, she almost found a balm in the placid tone of resignation with which, remembering himself, he would say, "Ah, that was left in our old home!"

'I said that she examined her own powers: that was not the age of accomplishments; but the fewer that possessed them, the more valuable they became, and Cicely was endowed with a talent for drawing, which even now may be enjoyed by only a gifted few. She had often for amusement, or prompted by affection, taken likenesses of her friends; they had been greatly admired and prized by those who had been thus favoured; and she determined now to test the sincerity of those encomiums, and, by increased diligence and cultivation, to deserve still higher approval. She consulted and placed herself under the tuition of a distinguished artist, who had already made a name and a fortune; and he, with the generosity and noble feeling of true genius, entered warmly into her plans, afforded her his instructions, promoted and enjoyed her success, and would receive, as his only fee and reward, the privilege of transmitting her features to his canvases, as you see them represented there. For many a year he regarded that portrait as the brightest ornament of his collection; and when, in an honoured old age, he still lived to survive her, he sent this valued relic to her children, as the most precious memorial they could receive.

'It is said that ill news flies fast; and even in those days of cumbrous travelling, the tidings of their ill fortune had reached the absent Georgy in a time that seemed incredibly short, at least to those that heard from him so quickly in return. But it was to Cicely he chiefly wrote, a letter glowing with affection and generous hope, asking her to come at once and share with him the fortune he was making. Years must pass away before he could leave his employment to return; but return he yet would, and restore her to her father; or if—and this was written less confidently—her father would encounter a change of climate for the sake of witnessing their mutual happiness, what could he say, but that he would welcome him as a son, and the old man should find that he had two children with one heart.

'None can tell how Cicely felt on reading that letter: that it opened a door for happiness and short-lived hope, we well may believe. I know that she consulted the physician who had always attended her father as to the consequences of his removal to that climate; but his answer was unhesitatingly given, "It would shorten his days." Again the constant heart faltered not; but in a letter full of beauty and calm affection, she transmitted her decision to her cousin, and extinguished his long-cherished hope for ever. A few more months brought the tidings of his having made another choice; and thus ended that mutual dream.

An involuntary exclamation from Elizabeth for a moment interrupted Mrs. Monro; and then it was in a more hurried tone she resumed—"I was the child of

that union, and when it became necessary to remove me to a European climate, the love and the home that had fostered my father's earlier years again welcomed and sheltered me. But I am anticipating by many, many years. It was with a soft and tranquil smile Cicely acquainted her father with this marriage; he seemed to think it quite a natural circumstance, and no more was ever said. Already she had attained distinction in her favourite pursuit, and with her moderate wishes, the profits it realised left her almost without a pecuniary care: thus diligent, successful, useful, and beloved, could she, even amidst these reverses, have been otherwise than happy? Oh yes, that speaking countenance always reassures me; and whenever I gaze upon it, I delight in reminding myself that at this very period of her life it was drawn.

But another change awaited her: in time her father's health and spirits began to fail—those treasures for which she had lived and sacrificed so much; his native air and scenery were prescribed for him; and though almost wondering how, under such altered circumstances, those scenes could do him good, she submitted the proposal to his decision, and he pronounced in favour of it at once. She had commissioned a friend to seek out a quiet cottage in their old neighbourhood, when she was one day surprised by a letter from the individual who had become the proprietor of their former home. He was a very distant relation, who had purchased it partly for the name; and though they knew him not, he now addressed them in language full of delicacy and respect, saying that he was going to travel for some time, and hearing they were seeking a temporary residence in the neighbourhood, ventured to ask them, would they honour him by occupying his house while he was away?

Cicely looked at her father: again she wondered how he would decide; but he thought his days were numbered; and though he spoke it not to her, his heart swelled with pleasure at the prospect of ending them within those old familiar walls. The offer was accepted, frankly, cordially, even as it had been made. What more need I say? Mr. Monro did not travel, at least for a while; when he did, it was only to take a little tour, with Cicely as his bride, and then return with her to cheer her father through many a happy year in his old ancestral home.

And now, Elizabeth, will you allow that constancy and happiness are not incompatible, and that it is a virtue not to be monopolised by one exclusive sentiment?

Oh yes, mamma: thank you for your little story. Much as I loved dear grandmamma, I never loved her half so well as now: forgive me, sweet picture, for my heedless words. But, mamma, though I admit you have given an example of constancy under trial—constancy to a principle of mingled duty and affection—do you think that if dear grandmamma had really loved her Georgy—you know, mamma, he was your own papa—had she truly loved him as you seemed to imply, even though she might have acted as nobly in sacrificing her own wishes, could she ever have been as content and happy as she was—as full of life and animation as even I remember her—as full of serenity and peace as she there looks down upon us now? Oh, mamma! give up that point: she loved him no longer; she was inconstant to Georgy: she had learned to forget him, and he troubled not her joy.

There was a long pause of silence, during which Elizabeth somewhat repented of her remark, for she saw that her mother's downcast eyes had filled with tears; and when she raised them to answer her again, sad, and low, and broken was the tone in which she spoke. 'Long years had passed away, and blooming children were clustering about her, when I, a pale, puny, motherless little girl, was received amidst the group. Their noisy play was hushed, and we stood a charmed circle round her, when she, recalling old memories, told of the far-off day when a similar scene was acted in that very

room; and then intreated each young, loving heart to welcome me, even as she had done that lonely stranger then.

'Other years swept on, and that stranger once more returned, enfeebled by climate, and bowed with illness, to die where he had been once restored to life. Kind and true as ever was the welcome he received, gentle the eyes that watched beside his closing day; but before that solemn hour came, he had the joy, which I can well believe was unspeakable, of seeing his child united to the son of her he truly loved.

'And she—her life prolonged to see her children's children; the true wife; the warm friend; the tender mother, guiding and gladdening all, with a countenance so bright in age, none could think a youthful sorrow ever dimmed it—she, too, at length was about to be gathered to her fathers: parents, husband, even a loved child, were in that ancient tomb before her. And yet, Elizabeth, what was her last earthly wish? "When I am dead, lay me beneath the shadowing elms in Norton churchyard, close beside the grave of Georgy Hume!"

A PEEP AT THE TARTARS.

THERE is a book before us, which we wish somebody would take the trouble of working up into half-a-dozen books.* As it is, the value of its materials is lost from their being so densely packed. You can no more read it continuously throughout, than you can read a dictionary: at least if you do, you find, as in the case of a dictionary, that one word knocks another out of your head—one scene blending with what goes before, as in a series of dissolving views, till you have only a vague feeling of amusement or delight, without being able to recall specialities more distinctly than if all had been the phantasmagoria of a dream. The breathless haste of the travellers adds to the confusion of the reader. He is not permitted to lay down the volume for a moment to meditate on some beautiful picture, or some interesting group, while the artist is refreshing after his fatigue; but hey! presto! off he is whirled on the instant, to encounter other striking pictures, and other interesting groups. Even the costume of the fair author—for Xavier Hommaire de Hell writes ride and tie with his lady—serves still further to confound the mind, by presenting to us the picture of an amazon from the saloons of Paris scouring post haste, in male attire, through the steppes of the Tartarian desert.

But this book, while reminding one irresistibly of a kaleidoscope, is not all form, glitter, and colour. It contains much that is really valuable, and conveys a very distinct idea of the tribes that inhabit the country on the west of the Caspian and the north of the Euxine. The historical sketches that intervene here and there—the production, we presume, of the male pen—enable the reader to enjoy more completely the vivid descriptions of the lady; and, taking it as a whole, the volume wants only a little more quietness and expansion, to be one of the best of the kind we have met with for a considerable time.

It may be imagined that it is no easy matter to choose a specimen from such prodigious variety; but we were so much struck with the alleged progress of the Tartars in refinement, that we persuade ourselves our readers will be glad to hear something on the subject. One is surprised to be told of the *salons* of Astrakhan! but in these salons there are now European manners and fashions that transport the visitor to the *Chaussée d'Antin*. The Parisian novels of the

* *Travels in the Steppes of the Caspian Sea, the Crimea, the Caucasus, &c.* By Xavier Hommaire de Hell. With Additions from various Sources. London: Chapman and Hall. 1847.

day are read with as much avidity, and criticised with as much acuteness, on the shores of the Caspian, as on the banks of the Seine; and the names of Lamartine, Balzac, Dumas, Eugène Sue, George Sand, &c. are even as household words on the frontiers of the Kalmucks. This, however, it will be seen, applies only to the Russians of the higher classes, who read and speak French from one end of the empire to the other, and whose ladies are frequently well-informed and intelligent women. But from Astrakhan our travellers proceeded, with all the rest of the polite world, in a steamboat, to visit a Kalmuck prince; and here we obtain a view of the Tartars at home, which presents something more extraordinary.

'The little island belonging to Prince Tumene stands alone in the middle of the river. From a distance, it looks like a nest of verdure resting on the waves, and waiting only a breath of wind to send it floating down the rapid course of the Volga; but as you advance, the land unfolds before you, the trees form themselves into groups, and the prince's palace displays a portion of its white façade, and the open galleries of its turrets. Every object assumes a more decided and more picturesque form, and stands out in clear relief, from the cupola of the mysterious pagoda, which you see towering above the trees, to the humble kibitka glittering in the magic tints of sunset. The landscape, as it presented itself successively to our eyes, with the unruffled mirror of the Volga for its framework, wore a calm, but strange and profoundly melancholy character. It was like nothing we had ever seen before; it was a new world, which fancy might people as it pleased: one of those mysterious isles one dreams of at fifteen, after reading the "Arabian Nights;" a thing, in short, such as crosses the traveller's path but once in all his wanderings, and which we enjoyed with all the zest of unexpected pleasure. But we were soon called back from all these charming phantoms of the imagination to the realities of life: we were arrived. Our boatman moored his little craft in a clump of thorn-broom; and whilst my husband proceeded to the palace with his interpreter, I remained in the boat, divided between the pleasure I anticipated from the extraordinary things to be seen in a Kalmuck palace, and the involuntary apprehension awakened in me by all the incidents of this visit.

'The latter feeling did not last long. Not many minutes had elapsed after the departure of my companions, when I saw them returning with a young man, who was presented to me as one of the princes Tumene. It was with equal elegance and good-breeding he introduced me to the palace, where every step brought me some new surprise. I was quite unprepared for what I saw; and really, in passing through two salons, which united the most finished display of European taste with the gorgeousness of Asia, on being suddenly accosted by a young lady, who welcomed me in excellent French, I felt such a thrill of delight, that I could only answer by embracing her heartily! In this manner an acquaintance is quickly made.'

On being conducted to her chamber, the enthusiastic Frenchwoman found there a toilet apparatus in silver, with other objects both rare and precious, as well as handsome furniture. But where was the *couleur locale*? where were the characteristics of the Desert? Was this the house of a Kalmuck prince, 'a chief of those half-savage tribes that wander over the sandy plains of the Caspian Sea, a worshipper of the Grand Lama, a believer in the metempsychosis; in short, one of those beings whose existence seems to us almost fabulous, such a host of mysterious legends do their names awaken in the mind?' Prince Tumene, it seems, is the first of his nomade people who has exchanged his kibitka (or felt tent) for a European dwelling. 'The position of the palace is exquisitely chosen, and shows a sense of the beautiful as developed as that of the most

civilised nations. It is built in the Chinese style, and is prettily seated on the gentle slope of a hill about one hundred feet from the Volga. Its numerous galleries afford views over every part of the isle, and the imposing surface of the river. From one of the angles the eye looks down on a mass of foliage, through which glitter the cupola and golden ball of the pagoda. Beautiful meadows, dotted over with clumps of trees, and fields in high cultivation, unfold their carpets of verdure on the left of the palace, and form different landscapes which the eye can take in at once. The whole is enlivened by the presence of Kalmuck horsemen, camels wandering here and there through the rich pastures, and officers conveying the chief's orders from tent to tent. It is a beautiful spectacle, various in its details, and no less harmonious in its assemblage.' The scene in the kibitka, however, is more interesting, where the prince's sister-in-law still resided. 'When the curtain at the doorway of the kibitka was raised, we found ourselves in a rather spacious room, lighted from above, and hung with red damask, the reflection from which shed a glowing tint on every object; the floor was covered with a rich Turkey carpet, and the air was loaded with perfumes. In this balmy atmosphere and crimson light, we perceived the princess seated on a low platform at the farther end of the tent, dressed in glistening robes, and as motionless as an idol. Some twenty women in full dress, sitting on their heels, formed a strange and partycoloured circle round her. It was like nothing I could compare it to but an opera scene suddenly got up on the banks of the Volga. When the princess had allowed us time enough to admire her, she slowly descended the steps of the platform, approached us with dignity, took me by the hand, embraced me affectionately, and led me to the place she had just left.' The lady proved to be extremely handsome, but for the obliquity of her eyes, and the prominence of her cheek-bones; and her expression was that of the utmost gentleness and good-humour, with an air, 'like all the women of her race,' of caressing humility.

The entertainments at this visit were dancing and music; but on leaving the kibitka, a scene more wildly national presented itself. 'The moment we were perceived, five or six mounted men, armed with long lances, rushed into the middle of the *taboun* (herd of horses), keeping their eyes constantly fixed on the young prince, who was to point out the animal they should seize. The signal being given, they instantly galloped forward, and noosed a young horse with a long dishevelled mane, whose dilated eyes and smoking nostrils betokened inexpressible terror. A lightly-clad Kalmuck, who followed them on foot, immediately sprang upon the stallion, cut the thongs that were throttling him, and engaged with him in an incredible contest of daring and agility. It would be impossible, I think, for any spectacle more vividly to affect the mind than that which now met our eyes. Sometimes the rider and his horse rolled together on the grass; sometimes they shot through the air with the speed of an arrow, and then stopped abruptly, as if a wall had all at once risen up before them. On a sudden the furious animal would crawl on its belly, or rear in a manner that made us shriek with terror; then plunging forward again in his mad gallop, he would dash through the *taboun*, and endeavour in every possible way to shake off his novel burden.' The next exhibition of the kind was that of a child of ten years of age on a young white stallion, as wild as the other, and without saddle or bridle. 'We finished our soiree with an extemporaneous ball, that lasted all night. The Armenian, who first proposed the scheme, had to undertake the business of getting up an orchestra. I know not how he set about it, but in a few minutes he brought us triumphantly a violin, a guitar, and a flageolet. Such instruments among the Kalmucks! Is it not really prodigious? We had quickly arranged a *soirée dansante*, as complete as any drawing-room could exhibit; and

the merriment soon became so contagious, that the princess and her daughter, after much hesitation, at last overcame all bashfulness, and bravely threw themselves into a heady gallop—in which, by the by, one of them lost her cap. The wondering and delighted princess stuck to me for the rest of the night, like my shadow, and incessantly assured me, through the Armenian, that she had never in her life passed so pleasant an evening, and that she would never forget it. She expressed a strong desire to hear me sing, and found the French romances so much to her taste, that I had to promise I would copy out some of them for her. On her part she gave me two Kalmuck songs of her own composition, and transcribed with her own hand. According to Russian custom, the officers did full justice to the champagne, which was sent round all night at a fearful rate. They took their departure from this Kalmuck palace in their host's elegant four-in-hand equipage, lined with white satin!

From Astrakhan they pursued their way into the Desert, and this is the description of their first halt. The britschka, unyoked and unladen, was placed a little way from the tent, on the carpet of which were heaped portfolios, cushions, and boxes, in a manner which a painter would have thought worth notice. Whilst we were taking tea, our men were making preparations for dinner: some plucking a fine wild goose and half-a-dozen kourlis; others attending to the fire, round which were ranged two or three pots for the pilau and the bacon soup, of which the Cossacks are great admirers; and Anthony, with a little barrel of brandy under his arm, distributed the regular dram to every man with the gravity of a German major-domo. As for the officer, he lay on his back under the britschka, for sake of the shade, amusing himself with his hawk, which he had unhooded, after fastening it with a stout cord to the carriage. Though the creature's sparkling eyes were continually on the look-out for a quarry, it seemed, by the continual flapping of its wings, to enjoy its master's caresses. The camels, rejoicing in their freedom, browsed at a little distance from the tent, and contributed by their presence to give an Oriental aspect to our first essay in savage life, wherein I myself figured in my huge bonnet, dressed as usual in wide pantaloons, with a Gaulish tunic gathered round my waist by a leathern belt. By dint of wondering at everything, our wonderment at last wore itself out, and we regarded ourselves as definitively-naturalised Kalmucks.

My first night under a tent proved to me that I was not so acclimated to the steppe as my vanity had led me to suppose. The felt cone under which I was to sleep, the Kalmucks moving about the fire, the camels sending their plaintive cries through the immensity of the Desert; in a word, everything I saw and heard, was so at variance with my habits and ways of thought, that I almost fancied I was in an opium dream.

We must conclude our extracts with the following portrait of a Tartar princess of the Crimea and her family. 'She advanced to me with an air of remarkable dignity, took both my hands, kissed me on the two cheeks, and sat down beside me, making me many demonstrations of friendship. She wore a great deal of rouge; her eyelids were painted black, and met over the nose, giving her countenance a certain sternness, that, nevertheless, did not destroy its pleasing effect. A furred velvet vest fitted tight to her still elegant figure. Altogether, her appearance surpassed what I had conceived of her beauty. We spent a quarter of an hour closely examining each other, and interchanging, as well as we could, a few Russian words, that very insufficiently conveyed our thoughts. But in such cases looks supply the deficiencies of speech, and mine must have told the princess with what admiration I beheld her. Hers, I must confess in all humility, seemed to express much more surprise than admiration at my travelling costume. What would I not have given to know the result of her purely feminine analysis of my appearance! I was even crossed in this *tête-à-tête* by a

serious scruple of conscience for having presented myself before her in male attire, which must have given her a strange notion of the fashions of Europe.

'Notwithstanding my desire to prolong my visit, in hopes of seeing her daughters, the fear of appearing intrusive prompted me to take my leave; but checking me with a very graceful gesture, she said eagerly, "*Pastoy, pastoy!*" ("Stay, stay!") and clapped her hands several times. A young girl entered at the signal, and by her mistress's orders threw open a folding-door, and immediately I was struck dumb with surprise and admiration by a most brilliant apparition. Imagine, reader, the most exquisite sultanas of whom poetry and painting have ever tried to convey an idea, and still your conception will fall far short of the enchanting models I had then before me. There were three of them, all equally beautiful and graceful. Two were clad in tunics of crimson brocade, adorned in front with broad gold lace. The tunics were open, and disclosed beneath their cashmere robes, with very tight sleeves terminating in gold fringes. The youngest wore a tunic of azure blue brocade, with silver ornaments: this was the only difference between her dress and that of her sisters. All three had magnificent black hair, escaping in countless tresses from a fez of silver filigree, set like a diadem over their ivory foreheads. They wore gold-embroidered slippers, and wide trousers drawn close at the ankle.

I had never beheld skins so dazzlingly fair, eyelashes so long, or so delicate a bloom of youth. The calm repose that sat on the countenances of these lovely creatures had never been disturbed by any profane glance. No look but their mother's had ever told them they were beautiful; and this thought gave them an inexpressible charm in my eyes. It is not in our Europe, where women, exposed to the gaze of crowds, so soon addict themselves to coquetry, that the imagination could conceive such a type of beauty. The features of our young girls are too soon altered by the vivacity of their impressions, to allow the eye of the artist to discover in them that divine charm of purity and ignorance with which I was so struck in beholding my Tartar princesses. After embracing me, they retired to the end of the room, where they remained standing in those graceful Oriental attitudes which no woman in Europe could imitate. A dozen attendants, muffled in white muslin, were gathered round the door, gazing with respectful curiosity. Their profiles, shown in relief on a dark ground, added to the picturesque character of the scene. This delightful vision lasted an hour. When the princess saw that I was decided on going away, she signified to me by signs that I should go and see the garden; but though grateful to her for this further mark of attention, I preferred immediately rejoining my husband, being impatient to relate to him all the details of this interview, with which I was completely dazzled.

Our author's account of the Russians and their government is far from being favourable; but we can afford room only for this brief anecdote, which would appear to contain all the principles of political economy that are fashionable in that meridian. 'I was once in the house of a Moldavian landowner of Bessarabia, whose lands bring him in about ten thousand rubles a-year. The conversation turned on agriculture. "What!" exclaimed a Russian who was present; "your estate yields you but ten thousand rubles a-year? Nonsense: put it into my hands, and I warrant you twice as much." "That would be a very agreeable thing, if it could be done," said the landlord; "I flatter myself I am tolerably well-versed in these matters, and yet I have never been able to discover any possible means of increasing my income." "How many days do your peasants work?" said the Russian. "Thirty." "That's not enough: make them work sixty. What breadth of land do they till for you?" "So much." "Double it." And so he went on through the other items of the inquiry, crying, "Double it!—double it!" We could not help heartily laughing. But the Russian remained

perfectly serious, and I am sure he thought himself as great a man as Canerine himself. I really regret that I did not ask him, had he taken lessons in economics in the office of that illustrious financier.'

A VISIT TO THE GOVERNESSES' INSTITUTION IN LONDON.

ONE of the latest efforts of benevolence in this superlatively benevolent age, has been the establishment of an institution in London, designed to be a species of home to governesses in intervals which may occur in changing situations. Supported partly by subscriptions, and partly by payments, the institution, however, has a number of objects in view, all contributing to the comfort of this class of individuals, and which may be summed up as follows:—

1. Temporary assistance to governesses in distress, afforded privately and delicately by a committee of ladies.
2. Elective annuities to aged governesses, secured on invested capital, and independent of the prosperity of the institution.
3. Provident annuities purchased by ladies in anyway connected with education, upon government security, agreeably to the act of parliament. Money is also received for the savings' bank.
4. The home.
5. The registration. The above are all in full operation.
6. An asylum for aged governesses, for which a house and an endowment are both required.
7. A college for governesses, and arrangements for a diploma.

Should the institution fulfil these objects, there can be no doubt of its value. Charities often, we believe, do harm as well as good, from their tendency to supersede self-reliance. We would hope, therefore, that the institution in question, if not already self-supporting, will speedily be so. Much could we expatiate on the distresses of governesses, on the false position of governesses; but all that has been said a hundred times already. A thing more desirable to speak of is the possibility of governesses helping themselves while they have the ability to do so. Where there are parents or other relatives to support, saving is of course out of the question, and for such cases the warmest sympathy is due. But it may be asked, are there not hundreds of governesses who, with salaries of from twenty-five pounds and upwards per annum, could lay aside a determinate sum yearly, either to accumulate, or as the premium of an annuity? It can be done, for we know several instances in which it is done. Nor need there be any want of places of deposit. No part of the United Kingdom is many miles distant from a savings' bank or an insurance institution. That the establishment which forms the subject of the present notice will strengthen and confirm the principle of self-reliance, we would hold to be the best part of its design. Another matter of importance is the proposed examination and certification of competency by diploma; for this will not only diminish the number of governesses, by excluding from their body all who are not duly fitted for the task they undertake, but fix in a proper basis the position of this useful class of educators.

The institution was opened in May last, and is said nearly to support itself, by the ladies who resort to it paying fifteen shillings a-week for their board and lodging—a sum, we would have feared, so large, as to confine the benefit within too narrow limits. Nevertheless, we are told that 'the facilities for re-engagements are so great, on account of the office for registration being in the same house, and the arrangements are altogether so private and comfortable, that the

"home" is in much request.' We shall now proceed to give some account of the establishment in the words of a contributor.

It was a very bright spring day, and the streets looked gay and cheerful as we drove through them. My companion (to whose benevolent exertions the institution, as I hear, is in a great measure indebted for its existence) spoke to me of many touching cases of distress in which the ladies' committee had lately rendered assistance, and of the many more in which they could give no assistance, for want of larger funds.

At length we reached the 'home'—a good house in a good street (No. 66, Harley Street). The door was opened by a respectable servant in livery (!). We wrote our names in a large book which lay open in the hall, and then proceeded into a front room on the ground-floor. It was a sort of parlour or dining-room, to which a business-like air was given by some large writing or account-books which lay open on the table. This, I was told, was the registration office. Two ladies were in this room; they were inmates of the house, and superintended the registration. To the elder of these ladies I was introduced. Her office is that of house-keeper; or, to speak correctly, she is the mistress of the family, and is a kind friend and adviser to its numerous and ever-varying members. I soon discovered that she was an educated person—clever, active, and experienced in managing a large establishment; besides having a heart full of sympathy for those who are placed around her. She showed me the registration books, and explained the plan of their arrangement. It has been found necessary to classify the numerous governesses who want situations. Some teach many, and others few things. Some have much, others little or no experience. Some are nursery, some finishing, some daily, and some resident governesses. They have been divided into classes; and books have been printed accordingly on a very clear and easy plan. By referring to these, which are open to members and visitors, any lady who is in want of a governess obtains a list of persons possessing the qualifications she may require, together with their addresses and references, and she can appoint an interview with any of them. Books are also kept for the names, addresses, and requirements of those ladies who want to engage governesses; by looking over which, ladies who wish for engagements may find one likely to suit them. Having thus put the parties *en rapport*, the institution interferes no more, but leaves them to manage as they please. The advantages of this system of registration are great to the governess. It is entirely free of expense; it saves the payment of advertisements, and of entrance and commission fees to the professed agents for procuring governess situations, of whom the less that is said will be the better for them; it saves her the trouble and annoyance (and, we may add, the not unfrequent peril) of answering advertisements; and it gives her the advantage of the large connexion of the institution. Those governesses who are residing at the 'home' have of course the best chance of re-engagements, as they are on the spot, and can see any lady who applies for a governess, at the office, immediately. On the other hand, those who need governesses find this opportunity of selection very advantageous.

After seeing the registration books, and talking over their great usefulness, Mrs —, the housekeeper, proposed to show me over the house, as the ladies were, she believed, all absent; and thus I could see how she managed to make the establishment accommodate

twenty-five boarders. She took me across an inner hall to a handsome dining-room—I observed there two harps and a piano or two. These had been presented to the 'home' by some friends of the institution. Music and books, and various useful and ornamental articles, have been given for the 'home' by friends of the institution. This room, with its bay-window, looked remarkably cheerful in the bright sunlight: so free from noise or disquietude, it seemed to me that it must be a perfect Elysium to those who come here to rest a while from the worry of the school-room. The staircase is spacious, handsome, and well-lighted. The drawing-room is a large and plainly-furnished apartment, and it felt warm and comfortable. A lady was seated by the fire reading: I feared that our entrance had disturbed her, and we did not remain for more than an instant. Thence we proceeded to the bedrooms. The largest were divided by means of curtain-screens, so as to form several independent little rooms, each fitted up with every convenience necessary for one person. The smaller rooms were divided into two, and some were so small as not to be divided at all. They did not appear to the best advantage on this occasion, as it was what in domestic phrase is called 'cleaning day.' They were all being scoured, or otherwise set in order; but it was easy to see the air of comfort that would pervade the whole when in its proper state. In one of the upper rooms was an invalid—a girl of seventeen—for whom Mrs — told me every one in the house was interested. She could not rise from bed, and the other inmates vied with each other in attention to her. One lady was reading to her when Mrs — knocked at the door to inquire how the patient then was. She came out to speak to us, and I was charmed to see the strong interest which she felt for her young charge, whose illness is, alas! consumption. A few weeks ago these two beings did not know of each other's existence—each came to this house for her own convenience—and now how strong is the bond between them! The kind nurse was anxious to obtain the visits of a clergyman for her patient; and finding that the lady who had brought me to the house was the wife of a clergyman connected with the institution, she made known her wish—which has, I am sure, been complied with. This amiable woman spoke to me cheerfully of her own prospects. She 'hoped soon to get a situation; the registration office being in the same house, was a great advantage to all those who were at the "home." Nothing could exceed the liberality with which all things there were conducted.' She 'wondered how the funds could pay for all'—thought 'that governesses could not be grateful enough to the kind people who had exerted themselves in their behalf.' As to Mrs —, the house-keeper, 'she was all kindness and consideration for them.'

Mrs — told me afterwards that the arrival of a new inmate often occasioned some degree of uneasiness. Governesses, after a few years of their arduous life, are often soured in temper, and are not at all disposed to see things in a bright light. They are inclined to be selfish and discontented. Is this to be wondered at, when they have been always ill-treated and neglected? 'When they first come here,' said Mrs —, 'some of them are cross and unsocial, and not disposed to join in the general circle at meal-times. I do what I can to comfort and reason with them; and somehow the cheerfulness of the rest in a short time prevails over them, and at the end of a fortnight, persons of the most ungenial temper become amiable, and willing to assist in the general amusement.' Again, she said, 'It was sad to see how worn and weak they often were when they entered the "home," and how, by a few weeks' rest, and by the care of the medical attendant of the institution, they would become strong and well, and able to undertake another situation.'

The hours for meals are—breakfast at eight; luncheon at one; dinner at half-past five; and tea at eight.

After having seen and heard much that interested

me concerning this house and its inmates, I came away with a pleasing impression of the effects of judicious co-operation. This house nearly supports itself. Why should not governesses have such an establishment of their own in every large town in the kingdom?

THE CONTRIBUTOR.

THERE are few persons about whom the world knows so little, and inquires so little, as those who supply that portion of the stream of thought which irrigates the public mind in our countless and ever-flowing periodicals. A few names, indeed, are put forward as those of the contributors, and being usually distinguished by means of separate works, they attract some attention; but the great mass of journalists lie hidden in impenetrable anonymity, and after a busy existence, fraught in the aggregate with important social results, sink into the grave, unnoticed and unknown.

An account of contributors, could sufficient materials be obtained, would form one of the most curious and interesting chapters in literary history. It would perhaps show that to periodicals we are in a great measure indebted for the increased and increasing respectability of letters as a profession. For a long time, authors mainly depended upon private patronage, and were, in consequence, either sycophants or desperadoes; so that at length habit and circumstance came to be confounded with nature and necessity, and an inseparable union was supposed to exist between literary genius and the follies and vices of its possessors. The system of patronage gave way before the spread of knowledge. The middle classes rose gradually in intelligence and wealth, and the love of reading became more general among the people. Books were multiplied; but books alone could not meet the intellectual demand, and periodicals, therefore, were launched in all directions. Literary employment thus became more plentiful and more steady; and although authors did not all at once change their character—nor did the system, in its infancy, admit of their doing so—a revolution was commenced, which has made literature a profession for the honourable and industrious, instead of a mere refuge for the idle and dissolute.

Twenty years ago, a young man who voluntarily embraced the literary profession, or was driven by the force of circumstances to do so, was supposed by his anxious friends to have devoted himself to inevitable starvation. Before then, Sir William Jones had eloquently denounced the suicidal step; and he was followed by Coleridge, and later still by Charles Lamb, in one of his choicest bits of eccentric pathos. This was addressed as a warning to Bernard Barton; but it neither met with attention nor fulfilment. In spite of many prophetic denunciations, the ranks of contributors became at once more dense and more extensive; and although literature, at the present moment, like every other crowded profession, affords instances both of bad conduct and bad fortune, it is impossible not to see that the sweeping censure applied to it, both morally and economically, refers to a state of things that has passed away.

The common advice to follow literature as a mere recreation in the pauses of business, is doubtless a sound one when addressed to the many; and it should likewise be given to aspirants in the fine arts. But for all that, we shall still continue to have professional authors, painters, and composers, in addition to those who write, draw, or play for amusement or pocket-money. The advantage of these professions is, that they afford the novice a trial and an option. For a student of law, medicine, or divinity, there is no retracting; he must follow the business he has so painfully acquired, or sink. But the juvenile author tries his wings before he flies, and is determined by the result as to whether or not he will adventure into the fields of air. It is incorrect to say that he miscalculates or can miscalculate; for the question simply is, as to whether or not he finds his

trial-articles worth money. As for his throwing himself into the profession without a trial—proceeding to London, for instance, and taking up his pen for the first time, with the declared intention of gaining a subsistence by it—this is an absurdity that seldom or never happens. He may find himself in the wide metropolis, it is true, without friend, calling, or money; and he may apply himself to literature, or anything else, and fail; but his destitution is quite irrespective of the employment, and the profession is not to be blamed—though it constantly is—for his disappointment.

We have remarked that the public know nothing, and inquire nothing, about anonymous contributors; and in fact their total want of sympathy is a very striking feature in the case of the latter. Many a young writer flatters himself that he has produced something which will draw him from his obscurity—which will excite curiosity, or personal interest—which will at least gain for him one agreeable friend, attracted by the mystic law of congeniality. It is not enough for him that he has struck a chord which he feels will vibrate in the human heart; he would fain have sensible evidence that he has done so; and he yearns for intercommunion with spirits that resemble his own. The dream is not soon over; but at length 'charm by charm unwinds,' and he finds that it is his mission and his fate to address the general mind, not the individual; and that the voice from his lonely room is like the voice of one crying in a wilderness to the aggregate of the human race. This is doubtless a proud thought; but it has frequently the effect of giving a certain coldness and solitariness of aspect to the man, thus cut off during a very considerable portion of his time from personal communication, even in idea, with his kind.

We remember one instance, however, in which anonymous articles influenced in rather an important way the fortunes of an individual; and as the anecdote throws some light upon the condition of contributors twenty years ago, it is sufficiently germane to the subject of this paper to warrant its introduction.

Twenty years ago, the Leith and London smacks were the finest passenger vessels in the world, and as such were in great demand, as a means of transit, by travellers between Edinburgh and London. The voyage was not a very unimportant one; frequently occupying, as it did, eight or more days, and occasionally favouring the wanderer with a not very distant view of the continent. But the vessel was trim, the mariners skilful, and the fare capital; and it sometimes happened, when the company were congenial, that even in the voyage from the poorer to the wealthier country, the heaving of the lead, as the smack neared the Thames, was considered a melancholy, rather than a welcome sound. It was so on the occasion now to be noticed—at least by three individuals of the party.

Two of these were young Scotsmen, proceeding to the metropolis to push their fortune in the ranks of literature. One of them was unusually well provided for such an adventure, inasmuch as he possessed a trifling capital to begin with; that is to say, as much money as would enable him, by the aid of rigid economy, to await the turn of events for a reasonable time. His forte was the useful and practical. The other, though rich in hope, and tolerably well off in point of wardrobe, had hardly a guinea more than was required for his passage; and he depended, even for immediate subsistence, upon the fate of some manuscript articles. His genius lay in what is called light literature—poetry, romance, sentiment; and already he, as well as the other, had received some trifling sums through the post-office for contributions to the periodicals.

The young men had met for the first time on ship-board, but were soon well enough acquainted to talk of their projects and aspirations; and they had speedily one central point in common, where their eyes, thoughts, hopes, and hearts could meet. This was the third passenger, a beautiful English girl; passionately attached to literature herself, and having likewise some family connec-

tion with it; her uncle (one of the passengers) being an author of considerable distinction in science. The young lady, we need hardly say, was more struck by the beautiful than the practical; and the dealer in poetry and romance very soon obtained almost a monopoly of her attention. The other felt her neglect, but without complaining. His was a calm, steady, and astute spirit, which may be baffled for a time, but cannot be subdued. He watched his opportunity with the young lady, and returned again and again, however pointedly dismissed, till at length she listened, at first as a matter of necessity, but eventually as a matter of course.

In the meantime, however, her intimacy with the more imaginative of the two went on, till it reached a point hardly consistent, in her ignorance of his family and prospects, with feminine prudence. But we do not take into account the shortness of their acquaintance; for time, in its artificial divisions, has very little to do with the question. Had they been in the habit of meeting for years in common society, at the dinner-table or in the ball-room, they could not possibly have obtained the insight into each other's character which they now possessed, after tossing together on the vasty deep for a week. They appear, in short, to have been of what is called in romance 'congenial minds;' and if there was no positive plighting of troth before they separated, this was probably owing more to the pride or delicacy of the penniless adventurer, than to the coldness or caution of the wealthy damsel. She was indeed wealthy, in the true meaning of the word; for her fortune was large enough for comfort, without being so large as to render her the mere stewardess of her friends or the public. The young man, in spite of their increasing intimacy, felt the difference in their social position more and more deeply as the voyage drew to a close; and when at length the crowding sails, stretching from all parts of the horizon to one determinate point, showed where the majestic Thames opened to receive the tributary wealth of the world, he sank into a long and moody silence. His anxiety increased as they ascended the river; but when the confusion of landing came, rendered more distracting by the darkness of a dull and heavy evening, he felt as if he was in a dream. He clasped the small pale hand that trembled in his, as if dreading to let it go; and looked so wildly, by the fitful light of a lamp, into the young lady's eyes, that she caught the infection of his foreboding fear.

'You will not lose the address?' said she faintly.

'You will come—soon?'

'Yes; if—if—'

'If what?' At that moment her arm was drawn within her uncle's, who led her away with a cold 'good evening' to his fellow-passenger.

'If a miracle happens!' replied the adventurer inwardly.

The next morning the necessity for action restored in some degree his spirits; and it was with something not unlike a flutter of vanity that he took the way to the office of a journal by which his contributions had been received with some distinction. He now learnt, for the first time, that in London a literary article, however able, is not a personal introduction. His announcement of his identity with certain initials excited no interest. The gentleman he saw was polite and affable—hoped to hear from him 'occasionally'—and bade him good morning without asking his address. Of three letters of introduction with which he was provided, two procured him a general invitation to 'call as he was passing,' and the third an invitation to dinner. He accepted the last, and liked very much the frank and agreeable manners of the family and their guests; but when he made a forenoon visit at the house soon after, he found nobody at home, and heard nothing more from his new friends for a month, when he received an engraved ticket for an evening party.

The adventurer found himself, in short, as all adventurers do at first, a hermit in London; but it was not for society he had come, but for employment—not for

amusement, but subsistence; and smothering his disappointment as well as he was able, he applied himself with energy and industry to his task. But this, it must be remembered, was twenty years ago, when journalism was only rising into a business. Articles, more frequently than otherwise, were at that time inserted through favouritism; and one editor, of a very flourishing periodical, was so indiscreet as to say, that although he liked his offered contributions prodigiously, he could not afford to pay for them, receiving, as he did, so many (of less merit, no doubt, but still fit enough for the purpose) without the expense of a shilling! In other cases, the prices paid were very small; and in others still, the contributor, after waiting in vain for the appearance of his articles, could obtain neither manuscript nor money. The young Scotsman worked hard, lived poorly, and at length dressed meanly; but all would not do; and in a very few months after his arrival in London, starvation stared him in the face.

The miracle had not happened! Frequently had he gone to the young lady's house; but he never entered it. Often had he haunted her steps in the street; but when she turned round, he vanished in some blind alley, like a shadow, as the poor poet said to himself with a bitter smile, exorcised by the sun.

At this period of his metropolitan history, when sitting one day in his mean apartment, brooding over the destruction of his hopes, he received the following note through the post:—

'Mr — is advised to send contributions to the — magazine, with the signature of "Frederick." They will be paid for monthly by a cheque through the post-office. If Mr — wishes to preserve this employment, he will do well to observe the strictest mystery as to the authorship of the articles.'

It was not without a flutter of the heart he read this communication; for he knew that she was the only human being in the whole city who felt the slightest interest in his welfare. Was it not possible—nay, certain—that this opening might have been obtained for him through the interest of her uncle? As for the injunction to mystery, this was easily enough understood, since his ill-starred name might damage, but could impart no value to what he wrote. At any rate he resolved to comply with the instructions; and in due time he reaped the fruits of his obedience in the promised cheque.

The current of his thoughts, it may be supposed, influenced the productions of his pen; and in fact his articles may now be said to have been addressed to the young lady. He took extreme pleasure in elaborating some ideas she had herself thrown out on the voyage; and he took care, in his descriptions of natural objects, to use such language as would convince her how deeply even her lightest words had sunk into his heart. Occasionally his unknown correspondent accompanied the monthly cheque with some suggestions as to the subjects that would be most successful; and it so happened that the advice always corresponded with his own feelings and wishes, tending to lead him still farther into intellectual communication with one whom he now hoped to meet again in more fortunate circumstances.

It may be imagined that his contributions to a single periodical could have no extraordinary effect upon his fortunes in themselves; but they served to give him a *point d'appui* in his struggles with the world, an anchor wherewith to steady himself in the tide. The result was soon obvious. He became more independent of other journals, and therefore more prosperous. He extended the sphere of his labours, and rendered himself competent to do so by study. Although aware that, by the aid of some rare natural gifts, even ignorance itself may obtain popularity, he had learnt that knowledge was necessary to the working literary man, and he set himself to the task of acquiring it. In due time he had reached a certain status as a general contributor; and he then began to ponder upon the prudence of throwing aside the mysterious 'Frederick.'

His own name was no longer unknown. He had reached that point where the contributor ripens into the author, and he was already engaged in negotiations which were to terminate in the production of his first book. The injunction to secrecy had reference of course only to his own interest; and by breaking it, he would merely announce that the necessity for mystery was at an end—that his own name would secure the insertion of his articles. But it was necessary, before taking any step in the matter, to make that venturesome call, on which he had been hesitating for nearly a year.

It will seem to some readers not a little absurd that a serious passion should have survived so long without the sustenance even of a word or a smile. But it must be recollected that our contributor passed his life in a world of shadows. The idea of the young lady mingled with his labours as well as his dreams. He wrote not only of her, but to her; and in his small and silent study, he heard her replies as distinctly in his imagination, as if they had been whispered in his ear on that moonlit deck, cadenced by the waves of the German Ocean!

It was with a trembling hand he knocked at the door of her house, and with a fluttering heart that he found himself actually waiting in the drawing-room for her appearance. This was delayed for a considerable time; but at length Miss — entered the room. She seemed to have grown taller and fuller: there was a stateliness in her step, a pride in her eye, and a cold gravity in her whole manner, which awed and chilled him; and instead of bounding forward to meet her, which he felt inclined to do when he saw the door move, he bowed formally. An awkward silence ensued.

'May I beg to know,' said the lady at length, 'to what I am indebted for the honour of this visit?'

'I was in hopes,' replied he, in a tone of deep mortification, 'that you would have recognised the name on my card.'

'I do so. I remember you as a fellow-voyager; and I have pleasure in congratulating you on your success so far in literature.'

'It ought indeed to give you pleasure, since you are yourself the cause of my good fortune.'

'Sir!' said the lady in great surprise.

'I repeat, that it is to you I owe my capability of appearing before you as I do now, even so far as dress is concerned; but since I perceive that your kindness arose from mere charitable feeling, and that you are not inclined to accord to me the privilege of personal acquaintanceship, I shall content myself with now returning you my grateful thanks for your benevolent interference in my favour.'

'What interference? Nay, you must not go. Tell me what you mean?'

'I will tell you—and all! I was poor when I first saw you—desperately poor; but I had hope, and something more than hope—something I once dared to name in your ear! My plans, however, miscarried: I had no friends, no money, no knowledge of the world: I was ashamed to redeem the promise I had made to you to call; and by and by my dress was such as would not have been admitted by your servants. At that moment you stepped in to my rescue. You furnished me with regular literary employment; and, rising from this vantage ground, I have attained to a certain degree of independence. The mystery, however, you considered prudent is no longer necessary; and I come to resign the name of "Frederick" into your own hands.'

'Frederick!' the young lady almost shrieked. 'Surely you do not know what you say! You cannot be mean enough to assume the authorship of another's articles; but no—you are not; and without hearing another word, I know that I am lost!' He put the packet of anonymous letters into her hand; but a glance at the first was enough: she dashed them upon the ground, and throwing herself into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and wept convulsively.

So far we might go in a novel or a play; but the sequel

of this anecdote must be differently treated, as it contains nothing of the romantic, but, instead, a very remarkable instance of literary fraud.

During the voyage, the more practical of the two young men had made acquaintance with the uncle, and had afterwards called on him by invitation. His admiration of the niece was not lessened when he learned that she possessed a competent fortune at her own disposal; and being himself a gentlemanlike person in his appearance, and possessed of very fair literary talents, his acquaintance was by no means disagreeable to the young lady. He had learned, however, by his experience at sea, the key to her fancy, if not her heart, and suffered her gradually to indoctrinate him in the mysteries—mysteries to him—of poetry and sentiment. How or when the idea of arraying himself in borrowed plumes first occurred to him, is not known; but the fact is certain, that, up to the moment of his discovery, he passed as 'Frederick' not only with Miss —, but with the editor of the magazine. And this, not by downright falsehood, but rather by feint, well-managed denials (although his own name was Frederick); so that at length, in all but the eyes of the young lady herself, he withdrew from his awkward position, not only without loss of honour, but with some praise for his benevolence, in contriving, by means of his influence with the editor, to bring forward a famishing man of genius!

The extreme emotion betrayed by Miss — was caused by a feeling in which the enamoured of the voyage had very little part; for in fact arrangements had so far advanced between her and the other, that he at length threatened to expose her by bringing an action for breach of promise! The young lady, however, was firm. She would not wed the literary impostor; and the sentimental feelings of the 'Frederick' of the magazine were so much shocked by her contemplated infidelity, that he never asked her to wed him.

This, however, is the only instance we have known, in the course of a somewhat lengthened experience, of the speculations of the contributor attracting special attention to the man; and we mention the fact, in order to dispel one of the most painful and heart-wearing delusions of the literary life. The talents of a contributor, and the skill of a cabinetmaker, render parties engaged in the particular business anxious to secure their services: but there the personal interest ends. What, then, is to be said of the sympathy of the public when a successful contributor dies? That he has become a *subject* instead of a writer—one of the heroes, however humble, of literary history; and that the same attention is bestowed upon himself which, during his life, would have been accorded to one of his articles. It may be that his fugitive pieces are collected, and that he thus takes rank as an author; but in general, he passes away like a number of the journal on which he was engaged; the individual lost and forgotten, but his influence—great or small, harmful or injurious—left, an unavoidable legacy, to the public mind.

THE PALM FAMILY.

PALMS—keeping altogether out of view the scientific question of their organisation—are well entitled by Linnaeus 'the princes of the vegetable world,' a rank to which nature herself gives her countenance in their majesty of stature, and in the right regal crown with which she has decorated their summits. From time immemorial, the palm has been recognised by Eastern nations as an emblem of triumph, and as such was used in triumphal processions, of which a familiar example is found in the sacred text. Among ourselves, it is known only in a metaphor; and we speak of awarding the palm, without the privilege, in most cases, of a personal acquaintance with the exalted originals from which the expression sprung. In the words of the enthusiastic Von Martius, they 'hardly range beyond 35 degrees in the southern, and 40 degrees in the northern

hemisphere. The common-world atmosphere does not become these vegetable monarchs; but in those genial climes, where nature seems to have fixed her court, and summons round her of flowers, and fruits, and trees, and animated beings, a galaxy of beauty, there they tower up into the balmy air, rearing their majestic stems highest and proudest of all. Many of them at a distance, by reason of their long perpendicular shafts, have the appearance of columns, erected by the Divine Architect, bearing up the broad arch of heaven above them; pillars one hundred and fifty, and one hundred and eighty feet high, crowned with a capital of gorgeous green foliage!' The palm is thus the leading characteristic of the Eastern landscape.

Palms are commonly unisexual trees, although occasionally their flowers contain both classes of organs. By this expression is meant—and the botanical reader will pardon the explanation—that the flowers of the seed-vessel is usually found on one tree, and the flowers containing stamens on another; wherefore it is necessary that the pollen dust should be conveyed from the one to the other, otherwise the fruit will not be matured. This has been long known among the inhabitants of the East, who cultivate certain species with care and assiduity. In the spring, if one of the palm-trees with flowers containing stamina is not to be found amongst their palm plantations, they set out in the search for one, ascend the tree, and cut down its flowers; these they then carry to their plantations, and fasten a bunch of them upon the summit of the female palms, from whence the dust falls upon the flowers containing seed-vessels, and by this means the future perfection of the seed or fruit is successfully provided for. When attention to this custom is interrupted by some accident, the inevitable result is a complete failure of the crops, so to speak, for that season.

The aspect of the palm family, while there prevails a considerable 'family likeness,' is extremely various. No two trees could be apparently more opposed to one another than the curious palm the *Chamærops humilis*, with a short, squat trunk, and having the general aspect of a colossal fan, and the towering *Cerozylon andicola*, which rears up its exalted summit to the very clouds; but the most inexperienced botanist would, by a comparison, recognise the family resemblance, though compressed and flattened in the one, and surprisingly elongated in the other. The attribute of grandeur is the most prominent characteristic of this family of trees, whether taken collectively or as individuals. Some of the palms are very thin, graceful, rope-like trees: the calami and rattan palms are of this kind. The *Calamus rudentum* is sometimes four or five hundred feet in length, forming a complete vegetable cable. Rumphius says they are even from twelve to eighteen hundred feet long! These kinds of palms have occasionally curious appendages in the form of hooks, which fringe the edge of their fronds, and materially assist them in hanging themselves on to the taller inhabitants of the forests in which they are found. They abound in the Indian Archipelago. The rattan palms—held in equal estimation by fops and chimney-sweepers—delight in the densest jungles, and are found dangling in enormous lengths of stem from tree to tree, and tying together, in nooses of the most fantastic kind, even trees considerably distant from one another; their cord-like stems being also made even more graceful by the addition of a lovely foliage.

Other palms, on the contrary, are remarkable for their bulk, having stems three or four feet in diameter. The trunk of some bulges out in a curious manner in the middle, tapering off above and below. The surface of the trunk is often marked in a singular manner by spiral grooves, caused by the leaves falling off as the tree increases in age and stature. The surface of others is smooth and polished, and covered with a glittering siliceous coat; that of others presents the strange appearance of a dense clothing of bristling hairs, especially near the summit, where they are often

times most remarkable. Then, again, in their native forests, their stately trunks will be seen completely matted over with a verdure and profusion of flowers not their own: a great orchid will in some unaccountable manner get a firm seat upon their summit, and thence drop down its outlandish roots, and leaves, and marvellous flowers in rich profusion; or some of the wild-wood creepers will clasp round them, and, as it were, tie them on all sides to the earth, somewhat like the cordage of a ship's mast; while occasionally man himself makes the same use of them, and trains up their stems the plants which he has pressed into his own service: the common black pepper plant is thus trained up the trunk of the palm known as the *Areca catechu*.

The foliage of these noble trees is one of their most wonderful characteristics; it is on so gigantic a scale. Ten, fifteen, or twenty feet is by no means an uncommon length for some of the leaves to attain to. Those of the talipot palm, which is found abundantly in the island of Ceylon, are frequently upwards of eleven feet long, and sixteen broad, and have been used to cover the entire freight and crew of a small boat, fifteen or twenty men finding a complete shelter under this colossal leaf. Others of smaller dimensions are used as *punkas*. Their shape is exceedingly remarkable. Some are sword-like, and jut out on every side of the palm like a palisade of long spikes; others resemble large fans; and others are fringed like an ostrich feather, but on an immense scale. It is this enormous foliage which contributes so much grandeur to this family of trees.

The effect upon the mind of the great traveller before mentioned was such, that he despaired of finding words to convey it, although every now and then breaking out into strains of the most eloquent admiration. Along the banks of the Orinoco, the palms are found in the most picturesque spots, growing upon the granite rocks over which the river rolls in some parts of its course, or adorning the vast plains through which it drags its way. At certain seasons, Humboldt has seen these vast plains flooded, and has been astonished to observe fire and smoke issuing from the summit of a tall palm surrounded by the swollen waters. He found that the Guanacas are in the habit at these seasons of taking up their dwelling in the summit of the palm known as the *Mauritia flexuosa*; they prepare a kind of fireplace by means of mats, lined with a thick coating of clay, and here they kindle fires for cooking their food and other purposes. Though less imposing, the date plantations are described as forming very beautiful scenes; their summits perpetually fresh and green, and upheld in a majestic succession of colonnades, they have been happily compared to a temple of nature, representing an eternal spring. Under the refreshing shade of these palms grow in astonishing luxuriance the pomegranate, orange, lemon, olive, almond, and vine, producing the most delicious fruit, in a perfection which, considering the amount of shade in which they grow, could scarcely have been predicted.

As to the economical properties of the palms, nature seems to have condensed in one family the gifts she has more sparingly bestowed upon many others. The sugar of the cane, the wine of the grape, the flour of the cereals, the oil of the olive, the wax of the bee, and the salt of the earth—six of the most valuable articles for the support of human existence—have met together to enrich the palm family with their presence. In attempting to give a short account of the properties and products of the palms, it will be expedient to arrange them under two divisions: the first comprising such as are directly useful to man, as for his sustenance, &c.; and the second, such as are more indirectly serviceable to him, as weapons, &c.

Under the guidance of this rule, let us first commence with the article sugar. Sugar is yielded by many species of palms, such as the invaluable cocoa-nut, the *Arenga saccharifera*, and *Phoenix sylvestris*. Incisions

are made into the trunk and other parts of the tree, from which the sap exudes in abundance, and is collected into vessels. It is then boiled down, and forms a kind of sugar, said to be very good in its way, known as date-sugar or 'jagery.' Though not so much esteemed as the production of the sugar-cane, it is, nevertheless, exported into England in large quantities from Bengal. Some years ago, it was calculated by Dr Roxburgh that 100,000 hundredweight of such sugar was annually made in Bengal from the juice of one species of palm only. Each tree yields annually from one hundred and twenty to two hundred and forty pints of the juice, which, on an average, makes about seven or eight pounds of good sugar. The inhabitants of the Indian Archipelago derive the principal part of their sugar from the evaporated juice of the *Arenga saccharifera*, a small palm, replete with valuable properties. The jagery, while still warm and semifluid, is poured into coconut shells, and left to cool, when it forms a solid mass, and in this state is used by the natives. Singularly enough, jagery itself seems to partake of the universally useful character of the trees from which it is procured. When mixed with lime, it forms a cement, which resists moisture and solar heat, and is employed by the natives of Ceylon as we use stucco. In this condition it is employed for flooring, and coating of columns; and as it is capable of a fine polish, for imitating marble.

Palm wine, better known under the more familiar title of 'toddy,' is a second important produce of this family. It is simply the sweet juice which flows from the wounded trees, allowed to stand a little while and ferment, when it becomes highly intoxicating. The extraction of this wine is performed by regular professional operators, under the title of 'toddy-drawers.' Their implements are a broad knife and the shell of a large gourd; but the ascension of a tree fifty or sixty feet in height, is an undertaking not to be accomplished without some risk and difficulty. The toddy-drawer proceeds in this way: he procures the stem of some creeping plant of sufficient strength and pliability, with which he forms a kind of hoop around the trunk; into this he thrusts both his feet, and then by alternately using his hands and feet in a peculiar manner, he reaches the top of the tree without much difficulty or fatigue. When there, he phlebotomises his vegetable patient in a very scientific manner. The stump of the flower-sheath is firmly tied round with a ligature, and the point is cut off. It is then beaten soundly with a stick, and very soon the liquid begins to exude in abundance, being received into an earthen vessel suspended beneath the bleeding surface. A good tree, in a favourable soil and season, will yield daily from three to four pints for each blossom; but the *Carzota urceus* has been said to yield, during the hot season, the amazing quantity of one hundred pints of toddy in twenty-four hours, or a little more than a pint every quarter of an hour! The same juice, when distilled, yields the fiery spirit well known as *arrack*, the ruin of the European soldier in India. When fresh, it forms a cool and inexpressibly grateful beverage to him who, as Darwin says, can sit beneath the broad shadow of the palm, and quench his thirst with its delightful produce. The palms yielding toddy are cultivated also in clumps, known as 'toddy-topes.' And the toddy is here collected in a peculiar manner. The palms are all connected by ropes, tied to their summits, and hauled tight. The toddy-drawer then ascends a tree about the centre of these, and proceeds from one to the other by means of the connecting ropes, collecting the exuded juice, and lowering his vessel down, when filled, to an assistant below.

Sago forms a third valuable article afforded by the palm, of which about 36,000 hundredweight finds its way into England every year. It is produced in wonderful quantities by many species of palms, individual trees of some kinds yielding between six and seven hundred pounds of sago. It is not unfrequently happens, that when the unhappy palm has been drained of its

life-juice, it is cut down, and from its pith and the softer portions of the trunk, when pounded in water, several hundred pounds of sago are extracted. The finest sago comes principally from the Moluccas, where it is procured from a palm which grows in vast forests. This substance forms frequently the sole support of the natives, and is at all times a most essential portion of their diet; its dietetic value among ourselves need not be dwelt upon.

In the year 1841, the enormous quantity of 168,528 hundredweight of palm-oil was imported into this country, and the consumption is probably considerably greater at the present moment. It is obtained from a species of palm called the *Elais*. This substance is extensively employed in the manufacture of candles, which, however, have a disagreeable colour, though the light is pure and bright. It enters also largely into the composition of some kinds of soap, and is used in immense quantities as a lubricant for machinery. Cocoa-nut oil is, strictly speaking, a palm-oil also; but it presents several distinct features from the substance known under that name. It is obtained principally by expressing the soft part of the nut, and is coming into extensive use for the table-lamp. What a remarkable sight the wax palm mentioned by Humboldt and Martius must be, its trunk all covered over with a layer of wax exuded from the surface of the trunk, and in some cases thrown off in great scales by the leaves! Of a different kind of use is the great 'cabbage palm,' the *Oreodoxa oleracea*, according to Dr Royle. The large green top of the trunk of this palm is eaten, both raw and cooked, in the West Indies, where it is considered a great delicacy, an expression which is doubly correct. The unexpanded terminal bud of the cocoa palm is also a very choice article of food; but it has been stated that the trees die if it is removed. The *Mauritia Vinifera*, a gorgeous palm, sometimes a hundred and thirty feet high, besides yielding ropes, and oars, and a pleasant acidulous wine, contains within its fruit a pulpy mass, which, when prepared with sugar, forms a sort of preserve named 'sajetta,' so highly esteemed, as to sell for one hundred and sixty reals the pound. Martius mentions the curious circumstance, that a certain number of these noble palms forms the marriage portion of a bride, among the nations where the tree grows, and is by no means a despicable dowry.

The cocoa-nut, however, is the palm of palms, and has been well selected as a type of the useful endowments of the family. That learned traveller was right who said, it seemed as if nature had epitomised in the cocoa-nut the whole of the invaluable properties she had diffused among the family of palm-trees. The cocoa palm seldom fruits to any abundance before its eighth or tenth year, when it enters upon its career of unexampled usefulness to man. It yields fruit for sixty, seventy, or even one hundred years, producing from eighty to one hundred nuts annually. In good soils this wonderful tree will blossom every four or five weeks, and may be found almost perpetually adorned with flowers and fruit, and sometimes with both at once. The natives say the cocoa-nut is a tree delighting in the society of man; and it is certain it thrives best near his dwellings, since it is the custom of the people to deposit the refuse of their huts at the foot of the tree. The nuts, writes Mr Marshall in an elaborate paper upon this palm, are brought hither as wedges to fill in the interstices between the merchandise of our vessels: thus the freight costs nothing. Our supply is principally from the West Indies. A few years ago, it was estimated that six hundred thousand cocoa-nuts were thus annually imported into England, and this number must be greatly increased now. From the kernel of the cocoa-nut a pleasant kind of cake is prepared, which is a good substitute for bread. Puddings are also made of it; and with its milk, and the grated kernel, the incomparable Indian dish, curry, is prepared. Besides the value of the cocoa-nut as an article of diet, there is a kind known as the Maldivic cocoa-nut, the fruit of a

palm growing in the Isle of Palma, one of the Seychelle islands, which used to be valued at L.400 each, on account of its supposed medicinal virtues.

The fruit next in importance to the cocoa-nut is the date. The palm which yields it is the *Phoenix dactylifera*: it is cultivated very extensively along the edge of the great African and Arabian deserts; in one portion of this region to such an extent as to have conferred upon it the title of *Bilduljerid*, 'The Land of Dates.' The date-tree is the palm of the Scriptures: it was the emblem of Judaea, and will be remembered by the reader to have been figured as such in the well-known coin representing 'Judaea capta.' The date forms the principal support of the inhabitants of Arabia, Egypt, and the northern parts of Africa; with us, it is a luxury found chiefly upon the tables of the wealthier classes. This important tree grows slowly, but is said to live and bear fruit from two to three hundred years. The fruit grows in clusters, weighing from twenty to thirty pounds each, and is collected by the date-gatherer, who ascends the trees somewhat in the same manner as the toddy-drawer. From the value of the fruit, the culture of the date has received much attention; and the date plantations, whose majestic aspect has been mentioned, are carefully tended, and watered by artificial means. About one thousand hundredweight of dates is said to be imported into England, principally from Barbary. The *Tafilat* date is also much esteemed amongst us. The fruit, after being well baked in the sun, and dried, is made into a kind of flour, which frequently forms the entire sustenance of the caravans of the Desert, and will keep for a length of time if preserved from damp. Besides the fruit, the peduncle of the flowers is eaten, and with great avidity, especially by children. The traveller in the south of France will find that the date palm has wandered even there, and is cultivated not for its fruit, but for the leaves, which are sold for the celebration of Palm Sunday, at six or seven sous a leaf.

The wood of palm-trees is in many countries used for building purposes, and is said to possess a durability, and to offer a resistance to insects and weather, which that of no other trees can boast of. There are at this moment old houses constructed with it, which are in every respect almost as sound now as on the first day of their erection. The outer layers of the trunk of some species are so hard, as to have been used instead of iron for weapons, and drums are made from sections of the trunk. Mr Marshall says he has seen pieces of palm-wood so dense and hard as to resemble agate, and they have been cut and polished, and set as brooches. Cooking vessels, capable of containing several pints of water, and of enduring a considerable degree of heat, are made out of the spathes of other palms, and are extensively employed by the Caribbee islanders for evaporating salt water, and obtaining its saline ingredients. The great leaves of the palm-trees form an admirable thatch for houses, and frequently large temporary buildings are constructed in India with no other materials. By soaking the leaves in water, a fibrous material is extracted, which is made into cloths, carpets, &c. Baskets and buckets, close enough to hold water, are also made out of the leaves. The young leaves are formed into beautiful lanterns. The leaves are also a tolerable substitute for paper, the writing being executed with an iron style. They require a peculiar preparation for this purpose, and are then called *ollahs*. The woody ribs of the leaflets are used as brooms, pins, toothpicks, and torches. Other portions of the leaves form pens, and the sharp arrows which are blown from tubes by the Indians. Bristles of different kinds, used as needles, and as a substitute for hair in brooms, are derived from the leaf-stalks, and the midrib forms a capital oar. The substance known as coir, and now imported in large quantities into our country, is derived principally from the fibrous husk which envelopes the cocoa-nut. When this has been macerated in sea water, it is teased out, and then is

manufactured into an admirable kind of cordage and cable, very elastic, durable, and strong. Soaking in sea water is even said to improve them! The same material is largely employed as a stuffing for mattresses, being as elastic as hair, and less friendly to the presence of vermin. It is also woven into different kinds of matting for lobbies and churches, which are surprisingly durable, resisting for a length of time the effects of the very hardest wear. The trunk of many palms is made into boats, the leaf supplying the oar. Fans and punkahs are constructed out of the leaves. The stems of others are used to make bows; and the rattan, so well known among us, has been mentioned as derived from a palm of Brazil. The baskets and sacks in which the Java coffee is imported, are made from the leaves of a palm, which also affords material for hats, fishing-nets, shirts, and ropes. The wood is sometimes singularly marked and veined, and is hence largely used by our cabinetmakers for marquetry-work, and inlaying generally. Our toy-ware-houses have been inundated lately with a variety of toys manufactured out of the substance called 'vegetable ivory,' stated by Humboldt to be the produce of a tree growing upon the banks of the river Magdalena, and resembling a cocoa-nut palm. Dr Lindley quotes the following particulars about it from some Spanish botanists:—'The Indians cover their cottages with the leaves of this most beautiful palm. The fruit at first contains a clear insipid fluid, by which travellers allay their thirst; afterwards this same liquor becomes milky and sweet, and it changes its taste by degrees as it acquires solidity, till at last it is almost as hard as ivory. The liquor contained in the young fruits becomes acid, if they are cut from the trees, and kept some time. From the kernels the Indians fashion the knobs of walking-sticks, the reels of spindles, and little toys, which are whiter than ivory, and as hard, if they are not put under water; and if they are, they become white and hard again when dried. Bears devour the young fruit with avidity.' The comparatively small size of these kernels precludes the possibility of using them for many purposes to which ivory is applied, but within the sphere of their dimensions they promise to play a useful subsidiary part. Even in their very destruction the palm-trees are our benefactors, for their ashes furnish the washermen of Ceylon with sufficient potash to enable them to dispense with soap.

Enough, in our opinion, has now been said to place the palm family in its proper position. The question concerning them is not, What do they afford us? But what is there that they do not? Utilitarians to the very last, it might be said of them, that were there now no other vegetation in the world but a universal palm family, mankind would hardly have any cause for regret.

EFFECTS OF MACHINERY.

Notwithstanding the manufacturing power of our country, there is scarcely any manufactured commodity which is not produced by some other realm of a superior quality, excepting heavy machinery and cutlery. The carpets of Persia are yet unrivalled—one lately imported was thought worthy to be made the cover of the privy-council table when royalty presided. The cashmires of India are not yet equalled by the looms of France or Scotland. The leathers of Morocco and Russia are superior to our own. The finest cloth of Saxony has yet to be equalled in colour and durability by the clothiers of our country. The silks of China and France in colour and quality of material are found to wear better. The damasks of the continent, and the broad cloth of Holland, bear a higher price, and are more esteemed than our corresponding manufactures of Ireland and Paisley. Yet England produces all those and many more commodities at so cheap a rate, that she sells her inferior commodities to the nations of the world at a price so much less than similar and superior commodities can be produced by themselves, that they find it more profitable to purchase the commodities manufactured by us from their raw materials, than to use their

own. Thus a considerable portion of the muslin worn by the inhabitants of British India is manufactured in Scotland.—*British and Foreign Review.*

THE CRY OF THE EARTH.

'Weep on—weep on, ye April skies!'
Cries mother Earth in glee;
'Like drops from pitying angels' eyes
Their freshness falls on me.

Oh let the genial dews of spring
Be on my bosom shed!

To bring rich Plenty following
Gaunt Famine's iron tread.

Day after day in pain subdued
I hear my children moan,
"We faint—we die for lack of food!"
And I can give them none.

Fall soft, fall fast, ye welcome rains,
Upon the thirsty ground;
And be my dry and barren plains
With golden harvests crowned,

Till far and wide, from strand to strand,
The valleys laugh and sing,
And o'er a rich and piteous land
Glad, grateful voices ring.

D. M. M.

CRIMINALITY OF SINGING IN GREECE.

It must be observed that no woman of the island ever sings; and the Sfikian women, whose seclusion and reserve is greater than that of the other female Cretans, never even dance, except on some great religious festivals, and then only with very near relations. Maniás, who thinks that the readiness with which the women of Mylopótamo and other parts of the island join in the dance is hardly creditable to them, was greatly horrified at the idea of any respectable female ever singing; and assured me that it was quite impossible for a Greek woman to disgrace herself by doing anything so disreputable.—*Pashley's Travels in Crete.*

THEORY OF HUMAN ACTION.

Every human action has three aspects: its *moral* aspect, or that of its *right* and *wrong*; its *aesthetic* aspect, or that of its *beauty*; its *sympathetic* aspect, or that of its *loveableness*. The first addresses itself to our reason and conscience; the second to our imagination; the third to our human fellow-feeling. According to the first, we approve or disapprove; according to the second, we admire or despise; according to the third, we love, pity, or dislike. The *morality* of an action depends upon its foreseeable consequences; its *beauty* and its *loveableness*, or the *reverse*, depend upon the qualities which it is evidence of. Thus, a lie is *wrong*, because its effect is to mislead, and because it tends to destroy the confidence of man in man: it is also *mean*, because it is cowardly; because it proceeds from not daring to face the consequences of telling the truth; or, at best, is evidence of that want of power to compass our ends by straightforward means, which is conceived as properly belonging to every person not deficient in energy or in understanding. The action of Brutus in sentencing his sons was *right*, because it was executing a law essential to the freedom of his country against persons of whose guilt there was no doubt: it was *admirable*, because it evinced a rare degree of patriotism, courage, and self-control: but there was nothing *loveable* in it; it affords no presumption in regard to loveable qualities, unless a presumption of their deficiency. If one of the sons had engaged in the conspiracy from affection for the other, his action would have been loveable, though neither moral nor admirable. It is not possible for any sophistry to confound these three modes of viewing an action, but it is very possible to adhere to one of them exclusively, and lose sight of the rest. Sentimentality consists in setting the last two of the three above the first; the error of moralists, in general, is to sink the two latter entirely.—*Mill's Estimate of Bentham's Philosophy.*

Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by D. CHAMBERS, 98 Miller Street, Glasgow; W. & ORR, 147 Strand, and Amen Corner, London; and J. M'GLASHAN, 21 D'Olier Street, Dublin.—Printed by W. & R. CHAMBERS, Edinburgh.